



# **Farmable Wetlands Program**

## **Overview**

Restoring wetlands reduces downstream flood damage, improves surface and groundwater quality, and recharges groundwater supplies. Wetlands provide vital habitat for migratory birds and many wildlife species, including threatened and endangered species, and provide recreational opportunities such as bird watching and hunting.

The Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) is a voluntary program to restore up to 500,000 acres of farmable wetlands and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation. Eligible producers in all states can enroll eligible land in the FWP through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

## **State Acreage Allocations**

FWP is limited to no more than 1 million acres, and no more than 100,000 acres in any one state.

## **Sign-up**

Offers are accepted on a continuous sign-up basis and are automatically accepted provided the acreage and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Acceptance is not determined by a competitive offer process.

## **Eligible Land**

Eligible acreage includes farmed and prior converted wetlands that have been impacted by farming activities. The maximum acreage for enrollment of wetlands and buffers is 40 acres per tract. A producer may enroll multiple wetlands and associated buffers on a tract as long as the total acreage does not exceed 40 acres.

Acreage must meet the following FWP eligibility requirements:

- Land must be cropland planted to an agricultural commodity 3 of the 10 most recent crop years and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.
- A wetland must be 10 acres or less. Only the first 5 acres may receive payment.
- A buffer may not exceed the greater of 3 times the size of the wetland or an average of 150 feet on either side of the wetland.
- Participants must agree to restore the hydrology of the wetland to the maximum extent possible.

## **Conservation Practices**

The conservation practices authorized under FWP are:

- CP27 - Farmable Wetlands Pilot Wetland; and
- CP28 - Farmable Wetlands Pilot Buffer.

## **Contract Duration and Effective Date**

FWP contracts are from 10 to 15 years in exchange for annual rental payments, incentive payments, and cost-share for installing necessary practices. The effective date of the contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval.

## **Payments**

Eligible producers may receive the following types of payments:

- Annual rental payments for a 10- to 15-year period. The rental rate is based on the weighted average dryland cash rent.
- Upfront CRP signing incentive payment of \$100 to \$150 per acre depending on contract length. This one-time payment is made after the contract is approved and all payment eligibility criteria are met.

- Practice incentive payment equal to 40 percent of the eligible costs of installing the practice. This one-time payment is made after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified, and other payment eligibility criteria are met.
- Incentive amount equal to 20 percent of the weighted average dryland cash rent.
- Up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing permanent cover.

### **Cooperating Agencies**

The FWP is administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; state agencies; and local soil and water conservation districts.

Producers can find out details and sign up at their local FSA or NRCS office, both of which are listed in telephone books under "United States Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture."

### **More Information**

Information about FSA and its conservation programs is available on the FSA Web site at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

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